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INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE
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RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUCNMUC/EU CANDIDATE STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEPADJ/CJTF HOA
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEWMFD/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC

UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 000298

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E JWIEGERT; AF/EPS - ABREITER AND GMALLORY;
EEB/IFD/OMA - JWINKLER AND EEB/CBA - DWINSTEAD; EEB/TPP/BTA
DEPARTMENT PASS TO USTR FOR PATRICK COLEMAN, BARBARA GRYNIEWWICZ
DEPT OF COMMERCE FOR ITA MARIA RIVERO
DEPT OF TREASURY FOR REBECCA KLEIN
USAID FOR AFR/EA - HELLYER, DALTON, AFR/SD - CURTIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EINV](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [BEXP](#) [AF](#) [ET](#)
SUBJECT: ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT HOSTS DIASPORA INVESTMENT FORUM

* Missing Section 001 *

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to allow for substantive interaction on important topics and serious incubation of specific business deals. Participants could have submitted questions well before the conference so that the government decision makers could respond with detailed clarification to points raised. Attendees also expressed frustration to CommSpec about the lack of results from previous diaspora forums and expectations of the same from this year's forum. They believed the investment climate had not improved in recent years in response to questions and issues raised in past years. One attendee complained that the event was just a government publicity stunt. During this forum, the diaspora expressed to one another concerns regarding frequent power interruptions, poor telecom services, difficulty in opening letters of credit with banks, and congested traffic due to poor road quality and road networks.

FOREIGN MINISTER HIGHLIGHTS DIASPORA ACHIEVEMENTS

[¶](#)5. (U) Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin closed the forum, praising the diaspora for its contributions to Ethiopia. He said 19,000 diaspora are engaged in various investment activities and have invested USD 1.35 billion in capital. Seyoum went on to say that these projects created 80,000 jobs for Ethiopians and that the diaspora have shown increasing commitment and partnership for the development and well-being of Ethiopia. He specifically thanked the diaspora for its contributions in technology transfer, training of local labor force, and humanitarian assistance in the health sector. Seyoum reminded the audience that the diaspora have been given the extra privilege of engaging in various sectors reserved for only Ethiopian nationals and called on them to challenge the bureaucracy they might face in their day-to-day business dealings.

COMMENT

¶6. (SBU) The organization of such fora should be applauded, however, the organizers could have made the event a successful one by engaging the diaspora well in advance to identify issues to be addressed and to encourage a high turnout. It appears that funding for this forum was not used wisely and the event lost some credibility with its presentation selection. Notably, the Ethiopian Investment Agency (EIA) did not present and it is the lead agency responsible for attracting investment to Ethiopia. Moreover, inserting a presentation on the elections by the NEBE seemed overtly political and proved divisive as 30 to 40 people walked out during this presentation in apparent protest. Such poorly planned events with political overtures will only serve to push some diaspora investors away from a country desperate for additional investment.
END COMMENT.

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